THE WITCHING HOUR.

Snow for hours had blown and drifted,
And the rack went scudding by;
Spectrally the branches lifted
Naked arms against the sky.
What cared we though time was flitting,
What cared we though winds made moan
In the twilight sitting
All alone?

She within a rocker cozy,
I upon a hassock low,
Watching o'er her face the rosy
Cupid dimples come and go;
For the lover firelight heightened
Every blush with ardor bold,
And her locks of brown were brightened
Into gold.

Like the fabulous "Jack Horner,"
Of the merry nursery page,
Gleeful from a dusky corner
Grinned an idol gray with age;
And methought his dark lips muttered,
What I longed there to avow:
"Tell her," were the words he uttered,
"Tell her now!"

Then there fell a silence sweeter
Than when air is stirred with song
Than when strains in mellow meter
Swim with rhythmic sweep along,
In her eyes a look beguiling
Bade me not to break the spell;
Something told me in her smiling
All was well.

Slowly grew the firelight dimmer
Till the angles of the room,
Lighted by no ruddy glimmer,
Melted in the shrouded gloom
And not e'en the ancient idol
Saw love's apotheosis
Or the presage of a bridal
In a kiss.

—[Clinton Scollard, in Munsey's Magazine.

SAVED BY LIGHTNING.

The effect of the electrical phenomenon on the nerves of finely strung individuals is not unlike that communicated by a sudden and severe fright when the controlling power of the brain seems entirely cut off from action. In persons of stronger nerves the effect is not so great unless at some former period the nervous system has been serverely shocked, and even stunned, by the force of an electric current.

No person has had more frequent demonstration of this fact than myself.

I am strong and robust by nature and would scorn the idea of being nervous. I have several times been placed in peculiarly dangerous positions, where considerable nerve and pluck were required for the right performance of my duty, and on all such occasions I have acquitted myself to the satisfaction of all my friends. But brave and strong as I am in the face of most dangers, I am weak and helpless in a heavy thunderstorm.

Since a certain memorable night in 1883 I have been absurdly susceptible to the influence of electricity in any form, and it is an easy matter for me to predict a rising storm long before it has come up by the condition of the atmosphere and the effect it has upon my nerves.

I was telegraph operator at a small way station on a northern railway. My duties consisted in signalling the trains that passed by my door, selling tickets and acting as operator.

These combined duties kept me busy, and as there was scarcely a house within two miles of the station, the quietness of the place would have been unbearable had I been at leisure to notice it. But when my work was finished, late in the afternoon, I always found a short time to devote to reading before the evening express came in, and this was soon looked forward to with genuine delight by me as a relief from my other duties.

The express was not always up to time, and I frequently found myself waiting until 8 o'clock before she arrived, reading, walking and otherwise passing the time as pleasantly as possible.

I was engaged in the former occupation rather earlier than usual one warm, sultry afternoon in August.

The weather had been so excessively hot that I had been compelled to lay aside all superfluous garments and to do my work in my shirt sleeves. It was just such a day as always closes with a heavy thunderstorm.

About 5 o'clock the atmosphere began to change. A few clouds appeared upon the western horizon, and the sounds of distant thunder could be faintly heard.

A gentle breeze swayed the pines and rustled the green leaves of the tall oaks. I thought at the time that it had a mournful, ominous sound, and as the distant cry of a loon fell upon my ear an unaccountable shiver ran through me.

I laughed at my own fears and arose from my feet to dispel all gloomy forebodings, and began to lock up things around the freighthouse before the storm was upon me. When this was finished, I returned to my seat and watched the clouds scud across the now dark heavens.

In a little while the rain began to descend in torrents, pattering upon the tin roof of the station house like leaden bullets. The thunder pealed out with heavy reverberations, and the lightning was fairly blinding.

I closed up my instrument in the office and did not approach it again until the storm had passed. To have tampered with it in such tempest would have been folly. The lightning, as it were, played with the wire and the keys in an unpleasant manner and made me move farther away from it.

For half an hour the storm continued with unabated fury, and all along the track little rivers of rainwater were surging and rushing. The afternoon had grown suddenly dark, and it was impossible to discern an object twenty yards off. The usual time for the arrival of the evening express had passed, and still no indication of her coming had been received. This did not seem strange to me, as there was some danger of the track being washed out at different crossings, and it was probable that some delay would be caused.

I felt the lonesomeness of my position extremely that night. When I glanced out of the window into the murky darkness and heard the fitful rush of the wind through the pines and trembled at the heavy crash of the thunder, I was forced to admit that I did not enjoy the situation.

Twice I went out on the platform to see if I could hear anything of the coming train, but on each occasion I was met with such a blast of wind and rain that I was only too glad to seek the shelter of the house again.

When the small office clock struck 9, I could stand it no longer, but donning my cloth cap and coat I opened the door to sally forth again. As I did so the shrill shriek of a woman greeted my astonished ears.

At first I concluded that it was the work of the wind, but a second time the cry rose above the storm, clear and distinct. There was no mistaking the sound. It was the cry of a woman in distress, and came out of the storm not far distant.

I started along the platform with an answering shout, and had not gone far before I encountered a woman staggering along the track.

"What is the matter?" I inquired in as loud a voice as I could command.

"For heaven's sake, come quick!" she shrieked wildly. "Come quick! The train has run off the line! All are lost—my husband—my child—dead—dead!"

The horrible situation flashed over my bewildered senses in a moment. Just around the curve was a deep crossing, and the rain must have washed down the embankment in time to wreck the evening express. This woman was the only one saved, and she had managed to crawl up to the station for assistance.

I helped the woman up on the platform, and told her to hurry into the station house and wait until my return. Then, with lantern in hand, I started on a run toward the scene of the disaster. It was barely a quarter of a mile to the crossing, but it seemed ages to me before I reached it.

All was quiet; not a moan nor shriek of any kind could be heard. The storm still raged around. I looked down the embankment, expecting to see a heap of broken, twisted iron mixed up with the dead and dying passengers.

I then examined the crossing and found the line in good condition. A small slip had been caused by a large current of water, but everything—so far as I could see—was in perfect order.

What could it all mean? And in an agony of fear and dread I stood still and thought. In my excitement I had not asked the woman where the accident had happened, but took it for granted that it was at the crossing.

It might be half a mile farther on, or it might be a mile or more, I reasoned. But, at all events, it would be better to return to the station and get the right place from the woman's own lips. So I turned my face in the direction of the station once more and began running with all my strength.

As I hurried along I glanced occasionally at the line to see if it was in good condition. When I reached the new switch, which was used for siding trains, I suddenly stopped. The switch was turned. I could not believe it possible that I had been so careless as to leave it in such a condition. If the express should come along when it was turned, nothing could save her from being dashed down a steep embankment.

While I was still wondering at the strange condition of things I heard the long, shrill shriek of the belated and, as I supposed, wrecked express. The next moment the headlight of the engine rushed in sight around the curve and made a long path of light along the line.

There was evidently no accident, but there would be one in a few moments if the brake was not turned back.

This could be done in one way only—by reaching the station before the train reached the switch, and turning the heavy lever that connected the two. Could I do it? I started for the station on a dead run.

I do not know how I reached it. I was dimly conscious of running blindly through the darkness, stumbling against the rails, and finally leaping upon the platform, seizing the iron lever desperately in both hands.

I heard the heavy bolts fly into their sockets, and then before I could "key" it the heavy wheels rumbled over the switch. It seemed for a moment that the heavy pressure would jerk the lever out of my hands, but I clung to it tenaciously, and finally the last wheel rumbled over the fatal place.

The evening express did not usually stop at the station, but merely slowed up to see if there were any passengers. But before I could recover from my excitement the long line of black carriages were brought to a standstill and the guard was hurrying toward me.

"Jim," he said, "take this package and lock it up securely in the safe until called for. Be very careful of it, for it is something valuable. I will explain later."

Then, without waiting for a reply, he shoved a small, heavy parcel into my hands, blew his whistle and leaped upon the train.

The next moment the long line of carriages was swiftly flying southward, and I was once more alone.

By this time I felt so thoroughly exhausted by the excitement and strain upon my nerves that I reeled into the station like a drunken man.

I dropped into a chair, completely bewildered. The parcel lay before me, but I took no notice of it, my thoughts being busy with the strange events of the evening.

There were no signs of the woman who had started me off to find the wrecked train. In fact, I felt too tired to search for her. She had sent me on a wild goose chase and came near causing the death of many people, and to my mind she seemed to deserve punishment little short of death.

The storm was still raging without. The thunder shook the station to its foundation, and the wind helped to make it seem like a cradle rocked with invisible hands.

I remained seated in my chair, staring blankly at the wall for probably ten minutes. A thousand thoughts and conjectures flashed through my brain during that time, and then, as I involuntarily turned my head, I started back with a nervous jump. In the doorway stood the woman who had told me about the accident.

"Good heavens!" I cried, "what is the meaning of this?"

She smiled, displaying her white teeth.

"The meaning of what?" she asked in the calmest manner possible.

I jumped from my chair.

"Of this!" I shouted. "Of telling me that the express had jumped the track—that your husband and child were dead. That's what, madam."

She laughed softly.

"That was a ruse to get you to leave the station," she replied. "You are such a home body that I couldn't get you to go in the storm unless I resorted to a trick. But you came near defeating my purpose after all. You turned that switch back in its proper place just in the nick of time."

"Yes, and you turned it wrong in the first place, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"You she fiend!" I cried, as I gazed on her in utter abhorrence.

"Don't call me hard names. It makes me think that you don't appreciate my company, and I'm so sensitive!"

"Do you know what would have happened if I had not turned that switch into its proper position?"

Another light laugh.

"Oh, yes, I know," said she.

"I don't think you do."

"You want to draw me out, I see. Man, if you hadn't righted that switch a dozen or more mortals would have been hurled into eternity, and you would be tried for murder. I had no grudge against you, and should have preferred to have the train wrecked near the crossing, but as that couldn't be, I thought I'd throw her off near the switch. But you saved her and came near balking my plans. That stupid guard, who imagines himself so clever, arranged everything so nicely that he will be surprised tomorrow when you tell him the whole story."

"Are you crazy?" I asked.

"No, my dear. I was never saner than I am at this moment!"

"Pray what are you driving at then, I'd like to know?"

"I will enlighten you. You see that little parcel on the table, which your friend the guard let you keep for him?"

I laid my hand on the parcel and gave her a sinister look.

"Well, what of it?" I asked.

"It contains a sum of money anywhere between £5,000 and £10,000."

"Indeed?" I said contemptuously.

"Yes. It was to be sent to Edinburgh to-day, and as two or three of us got wind of the affair we concluded to stop it. By some strange mistake on our part the guard heard of our little plan at the other end of the road, and so to balk us he left it here with you. At the same time I concluded to play a double game and get the whole treasure for myself. For that purpose I called you out and turned the switch in order to wreck the train and so get hold of the money. You interfered and saved the train, but not the parcel. It is now in your hands, and I will ask you to hand it over without demur."

She made one step toward the desk, but I leaped toward it and grasped the parcel in both hands.

"Never!" I shouted. "This goes into the safe, and I warn you to get out before I pitch you out."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" she laughed derisively; "what pluck! I didn't think you would make such a fight over mere money. But this will bring you to your senses."

Throwing back the cloak which enveloped her small form, she stood before me a wiry looking man, with piercing dark eyes. In the right hand a jewelled pistol gleamed in the lamp light, and the hand that held it was as cool and steady as possible. I glanced into the small barrel of the pretty plaything and shuddered.

"You needn't be frightened," continued my strange visitor in the same easy tones. "I don't care to commit murder if I can help it, but don't drive me to desperation."

At this I recovered my self possession and began to think of a way to get near enough to grapple with this desperate villain. In such an encounter I knew I could easily handle him. A sudden, heavy blast of wind, followed by a blinding flash of lightning, fairly stunned us for a moment.

"That was a terrible flash," I said, noticing that my companion slightly paled. "You are not afraid of thunder, are you?"

"Afraid? No, you idiot!" he replied. "But give me that money, or I'll send a bullet through your head."

"One moment!" I cried.

"Not a"——

The sentence was never finished. There was a peal of thunder that seemed to rend the heavens in twain, and then a brilliant streak of fire flashed between us. I felt the building tremble, heard a confused murmur of strange noises—and then a blank.

When I awoke to consciousness, daylight was just breaking in the east. The sky was clear as on a summer morning, and the fields and woods were vocal with the songs of birds. But in my office everything was changed. At my feet lay the stranger of the previous night, with a little dark spot near his left temple. The heavy timbers of the station were burned and cracked, and my papers were scattered all about. The work of the thunderbolt had been effective, but on the table lay the money untouched.

When the guard came, I handed him the property. The stranger was identified as a notorious thief, and I was duly rewarded by the company for my work in saving the money. But since that terrible shock a thunderstorm has been to me the most undesirable thing on the face of the earth.—[Ex.

Gold-Plated Ship Bottoms.

This is the latest novelty promised for scientific display. An English scientist describes how this is possible without cost, and how beneficial the plan would be. It is simply the joining of ordinary copper sheathing to the negative pole of a galvanic battery, and in amalgamating the whole external surface of the copper with mercury. "Under the influence of the electric currents passing traces of the precious metals, gold and silver, will be precipitated from the water upon the sheathing, and will be there held by the mercury as amalgam." The idea that gold dustings exist in the waters of the ocean is not new, and there seems to be no scientific objection to the Englishman's theory. He thinks the amalgam on the copper sheathing would keep a ship's bottom free from barnacles, and that enough precious metal could be obtained to repay the process of securing it.—New York News.

CHICAGO LANDMARKS.

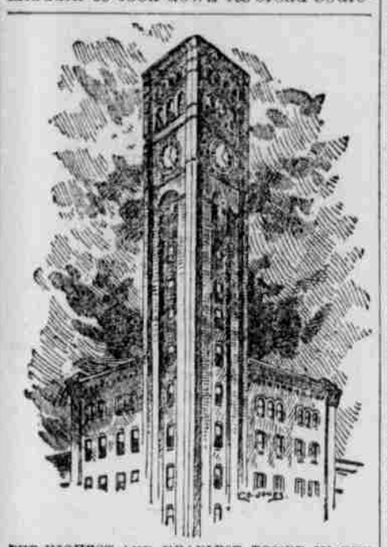
SOME NEW ONES THAT ATTRACT ATTENTION.

Heaviest Tower and Largest Front Door in the World—Facts About the Great Sky-Scrapers—A Fort Turned Into a Temple of Music.

Built on Made Ground.

Charles E. Nixon, writing of Chicago in the Inter Ocean, says: There is something magnetic in the growth, in the dashing spirit of this prairie metropolis—the Indian trading post of 1812, a plain of ashes in 1871, the sixth city of the world to-day.

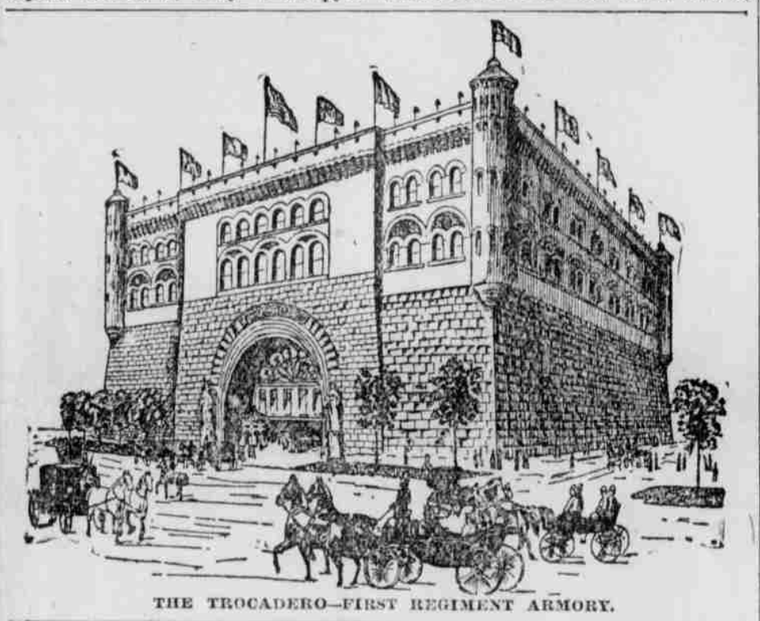
It almost seems like some story of Aladdin to look down its broad boule-



THE HIGHEST AND HEAVIEST TOWER IN THE CITY—NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY STATION.

vards, lined with immense buildings that tower into the darkening sky, and believe it all rests as a firm basis upon the site of a marshy border land that half a century ago was almost on a level with the great lake that overflowed its front.

Let us glance at some of the architectural wonders that "o'ertop the topless towers of Troy" or the pyra-



THE TROCADERO—FIRST REGIMENT ARMORY.

mids of old Egypt. One can hardly credit that clayey and uncertain soil could be made to sustain on a comparatively small foundation a tower 250 feet high, such as ornaments the Northern Pacific Railway Station, each pile in its foundation supporting tons. This tower is 28x28x250, and weighs 6,682 tons. Few people are familiar with the fact that the tower of the Auditorium weighs twice as much as the famous Eiffel Tower of Paris, and is on an area of foundation fractional compared with that of the Parisian wonder, standing firm as a rock on floats of steel rails anchored far below the level of the lake, that is only a stone's throw distant.

To the eye accustomed to harmonious proportion, these great buildings naturally impress more by their magnitude than their artistic grace; but connoisseurs will involuntarily admire the new Woman's Temple or the Pullman Building as graceful and artistic massive compositions in gran-

THE LARGEST FRONT DOOR IN THE WORLD.

ite and brick. Then there is the plain, classic facade of the Leiter Building, the largest store in the world, surpassing in size the famous Bon Marche of Paris. There is the great Home Insurance, the imposing Rookery, having rooms for 4,000 and 5,000 tenants; or, looking to the north, behold the Masonic Temple, the largest office building ever constructed, with its 5,000 tons of steel welded together, towering 200 feet in the air, surmounted by a crystal garden, filled with exotics of the tropics; indeed, there are so many of these architectural giants recently sprung into life in this city that it is difficult to discriminate in describing them.

Perhaps some of the lesser buildings that would be wonders elsewhere more likely satisfy the artistic mind cause of lack. But the field is prolific in this line and adds to the perplexity. Our foreign friends and native visiting brothers will pause in admiration before our Art Institute, or the imposing columned front of the Studebaker Building; get a glimpse of the Alhambra in Kinsley's Moorish front in brick and gold, or the sturdy Norman spirit of Richardson in the dark-red walls of Field's wholesale store.

One conspicuous structure on Michigan boulevard that would impress the critical John Ruskin, and as most unique and interesting, is the First Regiment Armory, now the Trocadero. It is in dignity strongly suggestive of a fortress, picturesquely indicating the conditions that led to the building of mediæval castles. It is generous in dimensions, covering an area of 164 by 174 feet. To the height of 35 feet the exterior walls are heavy masses of brown stone, unbroken by any aperture, excepting by the 40 foot wide doorway on Michigan boulevard, which is the regimental sallyport, and through which the command can march out in full company front. This opening is barred by a heavy oak and steel door, swung like a portcullis, and lying back of the embrasures in the thickness of the walls. It is protected by firing-slots in the heavy reveals on either side (think of a front door 40 by 40 feet, weighing tons). The lowest window sill is 35 feet from the ground, and six feet from the floor within. They are barred by heavy iron grills, being narrow ports, for firing, and on the outer and inner jamb to give greater range, and when not in use are closed by heavy steel plates. The whole exterior mass is crowned by heavily corbeled cornice forming both breastworks and firing ports, through which latter the face of the wall is commanded. Each corner of the building is marked by a heavy round turret, from which an enfilading fire can be maintained along the outer face of the main walls. For the nonce this remarkable building will be thrown open to the public as a temple of amusement; the shrill fife and the call of the war drum will be silent to the music of peace. The architects of the Auditorium are converting the great drill hall and its winding galleries into an auditorium that will have a seating capacity for about 5,000 people. This great room is 160 by 175 feet, without a pillar or partition, the three stories above being suspended by great rods from the steel trusses that support the roof. As a place of entertainment it will worthy of its famous namesake, the Trocadero of Paris. It will be furnished with a complete and beautiful stage; and the ventilation, electric lighting, and acoustics will incorporate all the latest and best devices. The great banquet hall will be utilized as a restaurant, from which the music can be heard.

If Chicago's great buildings will attract attention by day they will take a new interest with the shining lamps of nightfall; the great boulevards thronging with a restless multitude will blaze with light; the huge buildings, seemingly towering up among the stars, will cast strange fantastic shadows; circles of light will illumine the tower of the Northern; the Trocadero will appear like some grand old feudal castle, whose outlines blaze with electric lights; powerful flash lights will flash from the top of the Masonic Temple miles out over the scintillating waves of the lake, and every great architectural wonder will serve as the basis of some bright beacon and show that the spirit of Chicago never sleeps, and that the witchery of the night will outcharm the day in presenting attractions outside the walls of the White City.

Future of Castle Garden.

Castle Garden, in the Battery, New York City, once the home of grand opera, and the place of a national exhibition, and afterward the landing place of millions of immigrants, is now to become an aquarium. The Park Board has approved a bill to be introduced in the Legislature appropriating $150,000 for the establishment of the aquarium.

Scheme for a New State.

Some tireless Eastern genius has conceived the scheme of forming a new State out of the northern section of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. To this he would give the name of Superior, not because of the peculiar character which would be supposed to attach to the district, but because it forms the lower fringe of Lake Superior.

Good Joke.

Two Confederate stamps recently carried a package from Groton, Mass., to Boston. They were not detected in the postoffice.

WAS A WOMAN WARRIOR.

Hannah Snell, Who Fought in Men's Clothes and Was Promoted.

There have been many women warriors in the world, but the Philadelphia Inquirer thinks it must be admitted that there have been very few whose deeds were such as to claim the admiration of the country for any great length of time. In the annals of woman's warfare there are generally stories of over-zealousness, leading to fanaticism and subsequent punishment and disgrace. Seldom, indeed, has a woman warrior been gratefully recognized by the government of her country. Within the memory of our grandparents there lived in England a woman named Hannah Snell, who, when but a girl,

HANNAH SNELL (1840).

took the strange resolution of enlisting as a soldier. She served as a marine on one of the vessels of a fleet bound for the West Indies, and showed so much courage that she was repeatedly promoted. Her sex was unknown, and therefore it could never be claimed that Hannah Snell's success was due to partiality or favoritism. Once, when dangerously wounded, she extracted the ball herself, fearing that she might be discovered and discharged. After long service she returned to her native home at Worcester, England, where her adventures soon became spread abroad. The government on investigation of her really great career granted her a pension of £20. She died full of years and laden with honors in an inn near Wapping.

For Girls.

Any girl of 17 who is not deformed can make herself attractive and even beautiful if she will, says a well-known New York physician. A light course of gymnastics and plenty of outdoor exercise will make the figure round and elastic and develop the limbs. Tight shoes, corsets, heavy veils and late hours must be discarded, and every effort made to avoid excesses and live in a rational manner. Those having a thick, oily skin, broken by pimples or comedones or black-headed worms, there is no other alternative but a careful diet, if they would have it grow smooth and fine-grained. But little butter must be eaten, and no fat meat, and the food consist for the most part of vegetables and fruit. A tablespoonful of sulphur in honey taken every other morning for a week, then omitted three mornings and taken again, will clear the complexion in a couple of months, but will probably make the black specks more numerous for a week or two. A mixture of powdered sulphur in diluted glycerine, rubbed on at night with the other treatment, will soon cause them to disappear. Wash off carefully in the morning with soap and water, in which there is a little ammonia. After this, if the face seems oily, wash it at night with spirits of camphor, reduced with half as much glycerine and a few drops of ammonia. In the morning, bathe the face as before in water with ammonia in it, and after wiping it carefully, sponge it over with camphor and water, and in a short time the fairness of your complexion will delight you and surprise your friends.

Two Weddings.

The late Duke Maximilian, father of the Empress of Austria, was one of the most simple and affable of men. One day, as he was traveling on the train between his country residence and Vienna, he fell into conversation with a banker from Stuttgart.

"Are you going to Vienna?" asked the Duke.

"Yes; to see my daughter. She has just been married."

"Ah!" said the Duke; "mine has just married, also. Was it a good match?"

"Excellent! And that of your daughter?"

"Not bad, either."

"My daughter married the Banker Goldschmidt."

"Mine, the Emperor of Austria."

What the Names Mean.

The fashionable colors, or rather the fashionable names for colors now in vogue, are:

Angelique, a pale apple green.
Beige, really a beige drab.
Castor, a dark beige.
Castile, a bright buff yellow.
Coquelicot, a bright brick red.
Dravdo, a bright cinnamon.
Emerande, a brilliant emerald green.
Foxine, a brilliant light crimson.
Geranium, a pale geranium red.
Mascotte, a medium moss green.
Murier, an indefinite moss green.
Paradis, a bird of paradise yellow.
Pivoine, a deep metallic scarlet.
Vaveche, a deep moss green.

Whole Block of Them.

The British Isles comprise no fewer than 1,000 separate islands and islets, without counting mere jutting rocks or isolated pinnacles.